

CRTD. A

2009: A brief Annual Report

2009 Highlights and Milestones

During the past year, we were able to achieve concrete progress in all of our key programme areas. On the issue of **citizenship** for instance, a key progress was noted when, as a result of our concerted campaigning and public events, the Cabinet issued a decree in May 2010 allowing, for the first time, foreign spouses and children of Lebanese women to be issued unconditional permanent residency permits thus allowing, in principle, more than 17,000 families to legalize their residency in Lebanon. CRTD.A is now monitoring the implementation of this new decree and is assisting families supported by its legal unit in benefiting from this new decree.

With regards to our **women's economic rights and empowerment programme**, CRTD.A has been able to support some forty rural women cooperatives and groups in rural Lebanon in terms of legal assistance, capacity building and training, improving quality and variety of production (mostly in terms of traditional food products) and accessing local and regional markets. This has provided more than 600 women to build their skills, develop a steady source of income and participate more actively in decision making within their households and communities. We have received during the past year two study tours from Yemen, Egypt and Jordan consisting of local NGOs and groups who specifically requested to visit the rural women cooperatives involved in this project in order to learn from this experience.

At the level of our **leadership programme**, the focus on **women's public and political participation** has progressed on several fronts. Leadership training has expanded its geographical outreach to rural areas and has been integrated into the capacity building targeting rural women cooperatives as well as the women involved in the citizenship programme. In addition, CRTD.A has made progress in analyzing the experience of women who have gone into politics as candidates in the two latest local elections in Lebanon. Also, and as part of its on-going partnership and collaboration with the Women Learning Partnership, we have been working together on developing and testing new curricula particularly on women's political participation.

We have stepped up our **communication** work with significant progress in targeting and systematic mobilizing of local, regional and international media. For instance, during the period under review, CNN, CBC, BBC (English and Arabic), TV5, Al Jazeera, Al Arabyah, and others produced and broadcasted several documentaries on the work of CRTD.A notably in relation to women's citizenship rights. This has allowed CRTD.A to broaden its outreach significantly and reach a wider audience and public opinion.

Our **knowledge production dissemination** initiative has made significant headway with the coming in full force of our Lebanon Knowledge and Development Gateway (www.lkdg.org) which has witnessed a pike in the number of visitors and users of our e-publication (the Development monitor Al Majal, the Gender and Trade Monitor, and the Gender and Development brief). Throughout this year, we have completed major action researches namely on the economic value and contribution of women's household work, an analysis of women's political participation at local and parliamentary levels, and the role of faith based organizations in influencing social policies. The findings of these researches have been shared with sister organizations, public institutions and international organizations and will be disseminated by the end of the year along with recommendations for actions at the community level.

On the **internal** front, CRTD.A has advanced considerably in its **organization review** process. A new Employee Handbook and Staff Charter as well as a Financial Manual of Policies and Procedures have now been completed in their final version. Full implementation is expected by the end of 2010. Another significant progress is in the introduction of a new financial reporting and planning tool which will now allow us to develop organization wide financial budgets and which is now being tested. Our current system allows us to undertake reporting/monitoring on a programme/donor basis whilst our new add-on system will allow us to do so in a more comprehensive manner. This system will become operational in January 2011 and will be used in all our subsequent financial reports and budgets. In addition, and as a result of several staff retreats and consultations with partners, we have now developed the framework and key elements of our forthcoming five years strategic plan which will be finalized by the end of 2010.

At the level of **regional and international networking**, CRTD.A has increased and strengthened its involvement in a number of global initiatives. In June 2010, we have taken part in the WIDE¹ annual conference and presented an overview of our work on women migrant workers. We are involved in the preparation of the next AWID forum which will be held in 2012 and will focus on women's economic rights. Recently, CRTD.A has also been invited to contribute its experience to the Arab Families Working Group² particularly in the ways in which our action research has informed our programme interventions. Together with the **Women Learning Partnership**, we have taken active part in the UN 54th Commission for the Status of Women where we have jointly organized a number of public events which highlighted our work on women's leadership, political participation and the use of technology as an important tool to facilitate the empowerment of women particularly in rural areas. At the regional level, we have been able to step up the outreach of the **Equality without Reservation** campaign as well as the **Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR)** Campaign

¹ Women in Development in Europe network

² AFWG is a network of researchers focusing on issues related to Arab families such as youth and migration.

through dissemination of information, outreach to local groups and organizations as well as media coverage.

Finally, and despite a rather dire global **funding** situation, we have been able to maintain the same level of financial operation. We are happy to report that after a year of discussions, our funding submission to Novib was successful as we have been able to secure funding for our regional project on women's economic rights.

Problems

During the past year, we have had difficulties with the increasing work overload particularly at the senior post levels. Much of this related to the increased and high level accompaniment and mentoring of project teams (including the development of younger staff members) as well as meeting increasing demands for reporting from donor organizations and providing opportunities for internship and volunteers for young graduates. Simultaneously, we were reviewing our organigramme, job description and personnel policies. This situation has indicated a gap in the organization and the need to consider the recruitment of a Human Resources Officer.

We have not yet been able to start building a strategic reserve fund despite an organizational commitment to start doing so. This will be given top priority during the next year.

As we are consolidating our programme work both locally and regionally, we are also considering very carefully the need to expand our regional partnerships (with organizations in the MENAG region) in such a way so as to ensure that

New regional partners

Despite the fact that we have been able to maintain the same level of funding, we have still not been able to review our internal salary scale to ensure that we are able to provide fair wages and benefit and ensure retaining of skills and investment in human

resources. Whilst we consider that this matter is a key priority, we will be looking for expert advice on how we start addressing it.

The release of our public annual report has been delayed from March in view of competing deadlines and activities. We now aim to produce this key document by October 2010.

Finally, and with the increase in the depth and breadth of our work, we are now challenged to develop an appropriate Management Information System which will allow us to constantly gather detailed information of our work and its impact. Our main aim is to ensure that appropriate information and data are maintained and updated in a user friendly form and that it informs our learning and planning processes.

Changes

There have been no changes in the aims and objectives of the organization or in its overall direction. With the past year being relatively more stable than earlier ones, most planned projects and activities were carried out as planned with some re-scheduling made in order to accommodate for competing deadlines and the ability to remain flexible to take in emerging needs or unplanned changes within our external context.